

Message Text

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ACTION ARA-14

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SUBJ: US-HAITIAN MILITARY RELATIONS

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1. EMBASSY'S RESPONSES TO REFTEL QUESTIONS ARE AS FOLLOWS:

(A) NECESSITY OF MILITARY TIES IN MAINTAINING NORMAL RELATIONS WITH GOH. THE ARMED FORCES ARE A MAJOR COMPONENT OF THE POLITICAL EQUATION IN HAITI. ALTHOUGH BARRED BY THE PRESIDENT FROM OCCUPYING FORMAL POSITIONS IN THE MINISTRIES OR FROM TOO PROMINENT A PUBLIC ROLE, THEY ARE THE MAINSTAY OF HIS POWER. IN THE EVENT OF AN UNEXPECTED FALL FROM POWER OF JEAN-CLAUDE DUVALIER, THEY WOULD PLAY A DECISIVE ROLE IN CHOOSING A SUCCESSOR GOVERNMENT AND MIGHT OPT FOR SEIZING POWER. U.S. TIES WITH THE MILITARY ARE CONSEQUENTLY A VITAL INVESTMENT IN THE FUTURE. THE HAITIAN ARMED FORCES DO NOT CURRENTLY SERVE AS A MAJOR AVENUE OF COMMUNICATIONS TO THE GOH ON POLITICAL MATTERS. THEY DO, HOWEVER, COOPERATE FULLY WITH THE U.S. IN SEARCH AND RESCUE AND NARCOTICS CONTROL MATTERS, AND TAKE ADVANTAGE OF CURRENT FMS AND IMET PROGRAMS. ALL THESE ACTIVITIES HAVE REINFORCED HAITIAN-U.S. COOPERATION AND HAVE ENHANCED THE OPPORTUNITY TO DEVELOP GREATER APPRECIATION FOR U.S. NATIONAL IN-
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TERESTS.

(B) PRESENT STATE OF RELATIONS WITH HAITIAN MILITARY.
OUR PRESENT RELATIONS WITH THE ARMED FORCES OF HAITI ARE GOOD. THEY ARE BEGINNING TO REALIZE THE OPPORTUNITIES AVAILABLE TO THEM THROUGH THE SECURITY ASSISTANCE PROGRAM, AND ARE ACTIVELY SEEKING BETTER RELATIONS WITH THE USDAO AND OTHER

EMBASSY PERSONNEL. THE SECURITY ASSISTANCE SPECIALIST HAS ALMOST DAILY CONTACT WITH TOP OFFICERS IN THE HAITIAN COMMAND STRUCTURE. THESE OFFICERS ACCEPT HIS ADVICE CONCERNING THEIR TRAINING NEEDS FOR THE COURSES OFFERED IN THE U.S. UNDER THE IMET PROGRAM. WITH MORE AND MORE IMPORTANCE BEING ATTACHED TO THEIR STILL DEVELOPING TRAINING PROGRAM BY THE HAITIAN MILITARY COMMAND, OUR SECURITY ASSISTANCE STAFF MEMBER, ALONG WITH OTHER AMERICAN MILITARY AND CIVILIAN CONTACTS, WILL BE ABLE TO EXERT AN INCREASING AMOUNT OF INFLUENCE IN THE FUTURE. THE HAITIAN MILITARY VALUES ITS CONTACT WITH THE U.S. WHICH HAS BEEN AND WILL REMAIN THE MAJOR FOREIGN INFLUENCE IN HAITI REGARDLESS OF THE COMPOSITION OF THE GOVERNMENT.

(C) NEAR AND MID-TERM ACTIONS TO MEET THE MUTUAL NEEDS OF THE U.S. AND THE HAITIAN MILITARY. U.S. OVERALL POLICY NEEDS CAN BE MET BY CONTINUING THE PRESENT LOW-KEY RELATIONSHIP WITH THE HAITIAN MILITARY. THE SECURITY ASSISTANCE PROGRAM WHICH PROVIDES LIMITED BUT SUFFICIENT ENTRE TO THE HAITIAN MILITARY SHOULD NEITHER BE SIGNIFICANTLY AUGMENTED OR REDUCED. CONTINUED TRAINING TO SUPPORT DEVELOPMENT OF A SEA/AIR RESCUE CAPABILITY BY THE HAITIAN MILITARY FORCES AS WELL AS TRAINING OBTAINED AT U.S. MILITARY PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT SCHOOLS OVER TIME WILL CREATE A CADRE OF HAITIAN OFFICERS WHO WILL BE MORE OPEN TO U.S. INFLUENCE.

(D) EFFECT OF REDUCING OR ELIMINATING U.S. ARMS SALES.
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HAITI PURCHASES RELATIVELY FEW MILITARY ARMS FROM THE U.S. OR THIRD COUNTRIES. THE OPPORTUNITY TO OBTAIN SOME SMALL ARMS AND OTHER MILITARY EQUIPMENT FROM THE U.S., EVEN ON A STRICTLY CONTROLLED BASIS, HELPS MAINTAIN A CLIMATE OF MUTUAL CONFIDENCE AND KEEPS OPEN CHANNELS OF COMMUNICATION. THE LIMITED INFLUENCE WE HAVE IN THIS AREA COULD BE JEOPARDIZED IF ARMS SALES WERE FURTHER REDUCED OR ELIMINATED. REGARDLESS OF OUR MOTIVES, SUCH ACTION WOULD SEEM PREJUDICIAALLY PUNITIVE TO THE HAITIANS WHO HAVE MADE SUBSTANTIAL EFFORTS TO IMPROVE THEIR OBSERVANCE OF HUMAN RIGHTS IN RECENT YEARS. CURTAILMENT OR DRASTIC REDUCTION OF AN ALREADY RIGIDLY LIMITED ARMS SALES PROGRAM WOULD EFFECTIVELY END OUR ABILITY TO INFLUENCE HAITIAN DEALINGS WITH THIRD COUNTRIES. CONTINUATION OF U.S. TRAINING PROGRAMS COULD OFFER AN OPPORTUNITY TO EXERT GENERALIZED INFLUENCE ON A FEW INDIVIDUALS BUT COULD NOT COMPENSATE FOR THE ELIMINATION OF ARMS SALES TO HAITI.

(E) ROLE OF PERSONNEL EXCHANGE PROGRAMS. THE IMET PROGRAM, AND OTHER PROGRAMS ENABLING HAITIAN OFFICERS TO STUDY IN THE UNITED STATES, ARE VERY EFFECTIVE WAYS OF MAINTAINING CONTACT WITH THE HAITIAN MILITARY ESTABLISHMENT AND OF ENCOURAGING IT TO PLAY A MORE CONSTRUCTIVE ROLE IN THE COUNTRY. SOME OF OUR

MOST RECEPTIVE CONTACTS IN THE SENIOR RANKS OF THE ARMED FORCES ARE THOSE WHO ATTENDED U.S. TRAINING SCHOOLS 15 TO 20 YEARS AGO. THIS IS A LONG-TERM INVESTMENT WHICH CAN PAY IMPORTANT DIVIDENDS IN THE FUTURE. ITS CONTINUATION IS CLEARLY IN THE U.S. INTEREST.

(F) THIRD-COUNTRY ARMS SUPPLIERS. THERE HAS NEVER BEEN MUCH OF A TREND TO BUY WEAPONS FROM THIRD COUNTRY SOURCES. THE OCCASIONAL PURCHASES THE HAITIANS HAVE MADE OUTSIDE THE U.S. MARKET IN RECENT YEARS HAVE MOSTLY BEEN FROM ISRAEL (UZI SUB-MACHINE GUNS AND RECOILESS RIFLES). HAITIANS HAVE NOT, HOWEVER, MADE LARGE ARMS PURCHASES FROM ANY SOURCE OTHER THAN THE U.S. IF THE U.S. MARKET WERE CUT OFF, WE ASSUME THAT THE GOH WOULD TURN TO THIRD COUNTRY SOURCES BUT, BECAUSE OF HAITI'S POOR CONFIDENTIAL

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EXPERIENCE WITH THIRD COUNTRY SUPPLIES AND SPARES (INCLUDING HIGHER PRICES) AND A GENERALLY SATISFACTORY RELATIONSHIP WITH U.S. SUPPLIES, THE LEVEL OF PURCHASES WOULD INITIALLY BE AT A LOW VOLUME.
JONES

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